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AUTHOR Johnson, Christine; Johnson, Ray Lee
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ABSTRACT

The Valued Youth Partnership of San Antonio (VYP) has been dramatically successful in improving educational opportunities for the highest risk students. In school districts with dropout rates of over 40%, the highest risk students over a 4-year period averaged dropout rates of 2.5%. This booklet provides program results for VYP for the period 1984 to 1988 in terms of program participation, retention, academic achievement, absences, discipline, and self-concept. A total of 525 program participants, grades 6-12, have tutored approximately 1,575 elementary school students. Only 13 of the tutors dropped out of school over the duration of the program. The percentage of participants passing English rose from 53.8% in year 1 to 80% in year 4 of the program. For math, the percentage rose from 56.2% to 82%. Student disciplinary referrals also decreased over the 4-year program. Program participants, parents, counselors, and teachers report participants' improved self-concept, enhanced socialization and communication skills, greater independence and responsibility, increased desire to learn and remain in school, and heightened awareness and concern for the future. This booklet contains 11 data tables and numerous anecdotal examples of improvement in participant self-concept. (DHP)

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VALUED YOUTH PARTNERSHIP DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

1984-88 Program Results

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SEPTEMBER 1988

VALUED YOUTH PARTNERSHIP DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM

Intercultural Development Research Association

José A. Cárdenas, Ed. D.
Executive Director

Alicia Salinas Sosa, Ph. D.
Project Director

Contributing Authors:
Christine Johnson, M. A.
Roy Lee Johnshon, M. S.

SEPTEMBER 1988

FORWARD

Jose A Cardenas, Ed.D.
Intercultural Development Research Association

The dissemination of numerous national studies on the status of education, combined with the growing economic sector's need for skilled labor in the work force as we move into a service oriented and technology-based economy have combined to produce an unprecedented demand upon the schools.

These social pressures have resulted in educational reform movements in the various states as well as nationally. Unfortunately, many of the efforts to improve the quality of education have been unsuccessful. This is particularly true in the attempt to bring about drastic improvements in the education of atypical populations.

There is a long tradition of school failure in the education of the disadvantaged, the minorities and the limited English Proficient populations. This segment of the population comprised the bulk of the unskilled labor force of the country, employed in labor intensive and menial jobs, not only for a lifetime, but actually extending over many generations.

The inability of the work force to absorb additional unskilled labor, the demand for highly skilled labor, and increases in the numbers and percentages of the atypical populations, the minority, the disadvantaged and the limited English proficient is forcing the schools to develop new and alternative strategies which will be more successful with that segment of the population with which the schools have had the least success. Dropout rates of 50, 40 or even 30 percent are now intolerable, whereas past dropout rates of 70, 80 and 90 percent were deemed acceptable.

Current attempts to improve the education of atypical populations have been notoriously unsuccessful. Much of the effort has been directed at focusing middle class, cultural mainstream techniques in motivation and instruction which have proved to be dysfunctional and even counter-productive.

Initial efforts at school reform have not been successful because of three common fallacies in the rationale of the reform efforts.

The first fallacy has been the raising of educational standards while making no attempt to change or improve educational practice in order for the students to be able to meet the new standards. It is impossible to meet the higher standards, when the students lacked the skills to meet the old ones.

A second fallacy in educational reform has been the implementation of a host of new programs, in which educational opportunity is improved only for the better students. New and model programs consistently recruit from the cream of the student population, certainly improving educational opportunity for the students already succeeding, but doing nothing for the large segment of the population needing the most assistance.

A third fallacy in educational reform has been the development of new, remedial, special and model programs based on student deficit models. These models assume that the lack of success in school lies in deficits to be found in the target population, and further assume that the existing school program is adequate. In these models the solution to poor performance lies in the elimination of the student deficits. Student failure is commonly attributed to the students having the wrong culture, speaking the wrong language, not being motivated, parental indifference and neglect, wrong values, etc.

Though for the most part attempts to improve the education of the minority, the disadvantaged and the limited English proficient populations have been disastrous, there are many instances of success. Though the techniques of specific successful programs vary extensively, there are three characteristics which will invariably be found in the successful program.

These three characteristics of successful programs are: (1) the valuing of students in the model program in ways in which they are not valued in the traditional program, (2) the provision of support services not provided in the traditional program, and (3) the use of new partnerships and relationships among the community, the school and the home, which are conspicuously absent in traditional programs.

The Valued Youth Partnership of San Antonio has been dramatically successful in improving educational opportunities for the highest risk students in our schools. We have witnessed dramatic decreases in the dropout rates for students previously given no chance of success. Grades have improved, test scores have improved, attendance has improved and disciplinary problems have been significantly reduced.

In school districts with dropout rates of over 40 percent, the highest risk kids over a four-year period averaged dropout rates of 6%, 6%, 2% and 0.5 percent for each of the respective four years, a four-year average of 2.5%.

This success in the education of atypical populations does not lie in cross-age tutoring, but rather in the basic characteristics of the program: the valuing of youth participating in the program, the provision of support services, and the utilization of resources from a wide segment of the community.

Expenditures related to this four-year effort have been found more than justified. Hundreds of students have improved their attitudes toward themselves, toward the school and toward the larger community. Their direction in the school has been changed toward success, improvement, and eventual graduation.

But of utmost importance the effort has shown conclusively, that the school can succeed in the education of large segments of the population previously deemed uneducable.

We respectfully extend our appreciation to the project sponsors, participating school district personnel, and very especially to the students who succeeded when they were expected to succeed.

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PROGRAM RESULTS

Selected program results for the period 1984-88 in terms of program participation, retention, academic achievement (grades), absences, discipline and self-concept are presented below.

Program Participation

The VYP Program has been implemented in five school districts in the San Antonio, Texas area. Table 1 presents the number of campuses participating in the VYP Program by school district and program year. In the first year of program implementation (1984-85), the VYP Program was implemented in two campuses--one in each of the two districts implementing the program. During the 1985-86 school year, the program was implemented in four campuses--two in each of the two districts implementing the program. In the 1986-87 program year, the program was implemented in three school districts--two at two districts and one at a new district implementing the program. Nine campuses at five school districts implemented the program during the 1987-88 program year.

Table 2 presents the number of participants in the VYP Program by district, campus and program year. A total of approximately 525 participants have participated as tutors since the program was initiated in 1984-85 through 1987-88. Program participation increased from 50 to 100 from the first to the second year of implementation, from 100 to 153 the second to the third year of implementation, and from 153 to 222 the third to the fourth year of implementation.

Table 3 presents the number of students tutored by VYP participants (tutors) by program year. Approximately, 1,575 elementary school students were tutored by tutors participating in the VYP Program from the 1984-85 program year through the 1987-88 program year. An average of three elementary school students were tutored by each VYP participant.

Table 4 presents selected characteristics of VYP Program participants by program year. Data regarding gender, race-ethnicity, age, grade level and national free lunch eligibility is provided.

Retention

Table 5 presents the number of VYP program participants who dropped out of school by program year. As a review of the data in Table 5 shows, of the 525 students who participated in the VYP Program, only 13 or 2.5 dropped out of school over the duration of program implementation. The low dropout rate indicates that the program was very effective in keeping students in school who may have dropped out otherwise.

Academic Achievement - Grades

In order to insure that students participating in the Valued Youth Partnership Program continued their education, a primary goal of the project involved improving the academic achievement levels of participating students. To assess the degree to which the program was impacting student achievement, the percent of students passing English, Math and their overall average in all subjects (composite) were compiled and analyzed over the four years of program implementation. The results are presented in Tables 6-8.

Table 6 indicates that the average number of VYP program participants passing English with a 70% or more increased over the four years of program implementation. After the first program year, an average of 53.8 percent of the participants passed English, while by the end of the fourth program year, nearly 80 percent of the participants passed English, on average.

Table 7 shows that the average number of VYP program participants passing Math with a 70% or more increased substantially over the four years in which the program was operational. While an average of 56.2 percent of the VYP

participants passed Math during the first program year, 82 percent of the program participants were passing Math, on average during the fourth and final program year.

Table 8 indicates that the average number of students passing all their subjects (composite-grade) increased significantly over the four years of the VYP program. For the first year of program implementation, an average of 79 percent passed all of their subjects. This average increased to 86 percent of VYP participants passing all of their subjects by the fourth program year.

Absentee Data

Another objective of the Valued Youth Partnership Program was to decrease the rate of absenteeism among students identified for participation in the program. To assess the extent to which the program was affecting student's absentee rates, data on the average number of absences for all VYP program participants by each six week grading period and each program year were compiled and analyzed. The results are presented in Table 9.

The average number of absences for all VYP program participants for three out of the four program years was available for tabulation and analysis. Mean absences showed very little change over the last three program years. The average number of absences increased slightly from year two to year three, from 2.4 to 2.8 respectively, while during the fourth and final program year, mean absences fell to just over 2.

Fluctuation in the average number of absences is more evident when looking at each six week grading period. During the second year of program implementation, the average number of absences increased steadily from 1.0 to 3.3 over the six grading periods. During the third program year, mean absences also rose steadily over the six grading periods from 1.7 to 5.0, respectively. The fourth and final program year shows slight increases in mean absences for VYP program participants over the

first five grading periods, 1.4 to 2.7 respectively, with a slight decrease during the sixth grading period, from 2.7 to 2.3.

Student Disciplinary Action Referrals

One of the outcomes anticipated from student participation in the Valued Youth Partnership Program was a reduction in the number of disciplinary action referrals. In order to assess the extent of program effects in this area, data were compiled on the frequency and nature of disciplinary action referrals involving program participants for each six week grading period. Data for all participating campuses were aggregated for the four program years in order to identify overall movement. The results of tabulations are presented in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10 indicates that the average number of disciplinary action referrals did decrease over the four years of program operation. The number of disciplinary action referrals peaked in year two of the program with an average of 4 referrals per participant. This dropped to an average of 1.6 referrals per participant during the fourth and final year of the program.

Table 11 presents the nature and frequency for the disciplinary action referrals received by VYP program participants within each program year. As is evidenced by the table, tardies accounted for the highest percentage of disciplinary action referrals each program year, 47 percent in 1985-86, 34 percent in 1986-87, and 33.4 percent in 1987-88. In the second year of program operation, "disciplinary problems continued" and "other" disciplinary action represented 37 percent of the overall referrals for that year.

In 1986-87, there were 39 incidences of skipping which represented 15 percent of the overall referrals for that year. Over 13 percent of the actions were classified as "other", meaning that the student was not prepared for class, for example.

In the fourth and final year of program implementation,

there were 53 incidences of skipping and 59 incidences of "disciplinary problems continued", 17 percent and 19 percent respectively of the overall referrals. Therefore, when looking at the disciplinary action referrals recieved by VYP program participants over the last three program years, tardies, disciplinary problems continued, and skipping were the most frequently reported.

Self-Concept

As reported by VYP students themselves, their parents, and their counselors and teachers, participation in the program:

- . improved their self-concept;
- . improved their outlook on life, themselves, children, work and school;
- . enhanced their socialization and communication skills;
- . increased their openness/willingness to exercise self-control, patience and understanding of children;
- . gave them a greater sense of independence and responsibility;
- . increased their desire to learn and remain in school; and
- . heightened their awareness and concern for the future.

Some anecdotal examples of the improvement in participant self-concept include:

- "The kids like me. They ask me why I wasn't there when I miss school. All the kids have been real nice to me I think they look forward to me coming to be with them."
- "Tutoring helps me come to school because I have to come and teach the kids. I don't miss too many days because the students ask me where I've been, and tell me that they miss me. Everytime I'm absent, like last week, they ask me, 'Where were you?' I really like those kids. If I hadn't been a tutor, I would have missed more school."

- "This work with the kids has helped me. It helps me remember the times table in my Algebra class. Whatever I teach the students helps me with my classes."
- "The program has helped me learn a little more than I already know. At home my parents are surprised that I have started to like school. I usually work with my Dad and I usually get paid a lot but now I really just like to help more. I have a nephew that lives at home with us and I usually start to help him more with his ABC's."
- "The program helped me find myself. What I mean is that I found out I had many qualities in me. It helped me be nicer and it also helped me to know the importance of school...I like myself better cause the kids I tutor made a big difference in me."
- "The program helped me discover my courage and how I can control my bad temper. It also helped me be more responsible."
- "She acts a lot more grown-up. Her little sister starts school in September and she helps with her lessons she needs to learn."
- "This program has helped me. I used to be flunking all my subjects. Now I'm getting B's. I'm taking World Geography, Drama, English III, and Art. Tutoring taught me not to be shy. I have been in two plays this year, Romeo and Juliet and the Taming of the Shrew. I wasn't Romeo, but I was one of the guys that gets killed in a duel. In Taming of the Shrew I was one of the husbands."
- "I like this program because it helps the kids and I'm learning how it feels to be a teacher. I tutor the fifth grade and I've learned a lot about how kids behave."
- "I've been teaching Jose Luis, a fifth grader. His grades are going up. He was having trouble in social studies. Now he's going to pass. Because I helped him his grades went up. The same happened to two other kids last year. Because I helped them, they passed."

- "My attitude has changed from the time I was a sophomore. When I was a sophomore I flunked. Then the following year Mr. May told me about this program. And I got into this program two years straight. I began to get B's this year."
- "I like the program because I get to talk with the little kids. It reminds me when I was small. I never had a student come and tutor me, and it would have helped me a lot. Tutoring the kids has taught me how children are when they're small. I sometimes tutor them one-on-one. I've gotten to know their names. They've been helped because the ones that I've helped get hundreds on their spelling tests. The kids treat me as if I was their teacher. They ask me if they can go to the rest room, and I tell them 'I don't know, you've got to ask the teacher'."
- "Some of these kids are rowdy, always picking fights. Sometimes they pay more attention to me than to the teacher. I try to control them, but I really don't get into it. They listen to me more than the teacher."
- "When I was in elementary school, I was one of the rowdies. Now I only see about half of the kids I went with in elementary school. Most of them have dropped out. Most of the friends I used to hang out with aren't around any more. Some probably are married, some are in jail and some are probably dead. The drug scene is very strong. It affects your brain."
- "I have learned to respect teachers and know how it feels to be laughed at. I learned most of all how fast money can be spent."
- "The program has helped me to work better with children, improve my patience and how to be more responsible."
- "I used to feel very different about school. When I dropped out I wasn't going to come back. I was a big troublemaker in the ninth grade. I was always into trouble, fighting and skipping school a lot. When I came back, I started hearing about this tutoring program and I decided I wanted to get in it and stay, and I had asked one of my counselors."

- "As a tutor, I got to deal more with the teachers. I got to understand my teachers better. I worked with Mrs. Aleman and got real close to her, and I got to understand teachers better. I was like a teacher, and I know what the teacher goes through and so I don't give them so many problems."
- "Now I go to school every day, and when I'm absent I really miss it. When I was a freshman, I would have told you I was going to drop out of school because I didn't like it, but now I like it. I'm so excited about graduating. My whole family is surprised. My godmother is going to take me to several business colleges so that I can sign up. For right now I want to be a legal secretary. My mother can't believe the changes in me. I'm very happy, and I want all of my brothers to finish school also."
- "I hope this program gets bigger. Many of my friends have been asking about it and they want to become tutors. It certainly would be good for them and for the little kids. It helps everybody. It's made a big difference in my life."

Appendix
Tables 1 - 11

Table 1
Number of Campuses Participating in the VYP Program
By School District and Program Year

School District	Number of Campuses By Program Year			
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88
Edgewood	1	2	2	1
Harlandale	NA	NA	1	3
Somerset	NA	NA	NA	1
South San Antonio	1	2	3	3
Southside	NA	NA	NA	1
TOTAL	2	4	6	9

• NA = Not Applicable

Table 2
Number of Participants In The VYP Program
By District, Campus and Program Year

District/Campus	Number of Participants by Program Year				
	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	Total
Edgewood	25	50	53	15	143
Memorial High	25	25	22	NA	72
Truman Middle	NA	25	31	15	71
Harlandale	NA	NA	25	91	116
Harlandale High	NA	NA	NA	24	24
Harlandale Middle	NA	NA	NA	26	26
Leal Middle	NA	NA	25	41	66
Somerset	NA	NA	NA	30	30
Somerset High	NA	NA	NA	30	30
South San Antonio	25	50	75	74	224
Dwight Middle	NA	25	25	28	78
Kazen Middle	NA	NA	25	21	46
South San High	25	25	25	25	100
Southside	NA	NA	NA	12	12
Southside High	NA	NA	NA	12	12
TOTAL	50	100	153	222	525

• NA = Not Applicable

Table 3
Number of Students Tutored By VYP Participants (Tutors)
By Program Year

Program Year	Number of Tutors	Number of Students Tutored*
1984-85	50	150
1985-86	100	300
1986-87	153	459
1987-88	222	666
TOTAL	525	1,575

- * An average of three (3) elementary school students were tutored by each VYP participant.

Table 4
Selected Characteristics of VYP Program Participants
By Program Year

Selected Characteristics Of Participants	Program Year/Number and Percent of Participants									
	1984-85		1985-86		1986-87		1987-88		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Gender:										
Male	28	56	39	39	65	42	82	37	214	41
Female	22	44	58	58	84	55	107	48	271	52
Not Reported	0	0	3	3	4	3	33	15	40	8
Total	50	100	100	100	153	100	222	100	525	100
Race-Ethnicity:										
White	4	8	5	5	3	2	6	3	18	3
Black	1	2	0	0	4	3	1	0	6	1
Hispanic	45	90	95	95	142	93	182	82	464	88
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	4	3	33	15	37	7
Total	50	100	100	100	153	100	222	100	525	100
Age:										
12	0	0	4	4	3	2	3	1	10	2
13	0	0	19	19	14	9	16	7	49	9
14	0	0	6	6	35	23	29	13	70	13
15	8	16	15	15	27	18	56	25	106	20
16	26	52	15	15	46	30	36	16	123	23
17	14	28	12	12	7	5	10	5	43	8
18	2	4	9	9	3	2	3	1	17	3
19	0	0	2	2	2	1	0	0	4	1
Not Reported	0	0	18	18	16	10	69	31	103	20
Total	50	100	100	100	153	100	222	100	525	100
Grade Level:										
6th	0	0	3	3	6	4	0	0	9	2
7th	0	0	28	28	45	29	16	7	89	17
8th	0	0	20	20	55	36	112	50	187	36
9th	9	18	8	8	12	8	34	15	63	12
10th	32	64	20	20	8	5	6	3	66	13
11th	9	18	14	14	5	3	8	4	36	7
12th	0	0	7	7	22	14	13	6	42	8
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	0	0	33	15	33	6
Total	50	100	100	100	153	100	222	100	525	100
National Free Lunch:										
Eligible	32	64	81	81	112	73	71	32	296	56
Ineligible	18	32	19	19	20	13	23	10	80	15
Not Reported	0	0	0	0	21	14	128	58	149	28
Total	50	100	100	100	153	100	222	100	525	100

Table 5

Number of VYP Participants Dropping Out of School
By Program Year

Program Year	Number of Participants	Number of School	Dropout Rate (%)
1984-85	50	3	6.0
1985-86	100	6	6.0
1986-87	153	3	2.0
1987-88	222	1	0.5
TOTAL	525	13	2.5

TABLE 6

Percent of all VYP program participants passing
English, by grading period and program year

% passing Grading Period	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
1	N/A	62.0%	78.7%	75.8%
2	N/A	53.6%	77.3%	75.3%
3	44.0%	61.0%	73.0%	81.0%
4	N/A	51.1%	79.4%	78.8%
5	N/A	65.0%	80.5%	79.3%
6	63.6%	67.7%	70.8%	76.7%
Mean percent passing	53.8%	60.1%	76.6%	77.8%

TABLE 7

Percent of all VYP program participants passing
Math, by grading period and program year

% passing Grading Period	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
1	N/A	63.4%	75.4%	85.3%
2	N/A	65.1%	64.4%	86.5%
3	54.2%	71.1%	63.4%	80.0%
4	N/A	66.7%	64.3%	75.6%
5	N/A	63.3%	65.4%	77.0%
6	58.1%	65.8%	67.1%	87.2%
Mean percent passing	56.2%	66.0%	66.7%	82.0%

TABLE 8

Percent of all VYP program participants passing
Composite grades, by grading period and program year

% passing Grading Period	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
1	N/A	69.5%	86.5%	89.8%
2	N/A	69.5%	83.4%	88.1%
3	64.4%	67.4%	77.6%	86.4%
4	N/A	69.5%	87.1%	85.8%
5	N/A	63.7%	85.4%	83.3%
6	94.1%	72.5%	75.0%	82.3%
Mean percent passing	79.0%	68.7%	82.5%	86.0%

TABLE 9

Average number of absences for all VYP
program participants by six week
grading periods and program year

Grading Period	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
1		1.0	1.7	1.4
2	DATA NOT	1.8	1.6	1.8
3	AVAILABLE IN	2.2	2.3	2.0
4	COMPARABLE FORMAT	2.7	3.0	2.4
5		3.3	3.3	2.7
6		3.3	5.0	2.3
Mean absences		2.4	2.8	2.1

TABLE 10

Total number and average number of disciplinary
action referrals for all VYP program
participants by program year

Disciplinary Action Referrals	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
# of program participants	50	100	153	192
# of disciplinary referrals	101	440	258	311
# of referrals per participant	2	4	1.7	1.6

TABLE 11

Type of referral and frequency of
action for each program year

Type of Referral	1984- 1985	1985- 1986	1986- 1987	1987- 1988
		# %	# %	# %
Skipping		13 3	39 15	53 17
Tardies	Breakdown of Disci- plinary action referrals was not available.	208 47	87 34	104 33.4
Disrespect		27 6	27 10.5	43 13.8
Fighting		16 3.6	17 6.6	25 8
Possession of a weapon		0 0	1 .4	0 0
Destruction of school property		2 .5	0 0	7 2.3
Fireworks		1 .2	0 0	1 .3
Cursing		1 .2	21 8	5 1.6
Threats		1 .2	5 2	0 0
Throwing Objects		7 1.6	1 .4	0 0
Disciplinary problems cont.		122 28	20 7.8	59 19
Dress Code		0 0	1 .4	1 .3
Cheating		1 .2	0 0	3 1
Drugs		1 .2	4 1.6	0 0
Smoking		0 0	1 .4	1 .3
Other		40 9	34 13.2	9 3
Totals		440 100	258 100.0	311 100